

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of the claims replaces all previous listings of the claims.

Please cancel claims 1 and 16 without prejudice, amend claims 2 to 9, and add new claims 17 to 21 as follows:

Claim 1. (canceled)

2. (currently amended) The method as recited in Claim ~~[[1]]~~ 17, wherein the surface of the refractory material is heated by the laser radiation to at least 2000°C.

3. (currently amended) The method as recited in Claim ~~[[1]]~~ 17, wherein a power ~~an energy~~ density of 2 to 4 W per mm² is introduced into the surface.

4. (currently amended) The method as recited in Claim ~~[[1]]~~ 17, wherein the ~~laser~~ treatment with the laser radiation is carried out with an effective exposure time of 0.1 to 5 s.

5. (currently amended) The method as recited in Claim ~~[[1]]~~ 17 wherein the surface is treated using a laser beam with a ~~feed~~ scan rate of 1-10 mm/s, while the laser beam on the surface has a diameter of 2-5 mm.

6. (currently amended) The method as recited in Claim [[1]] 17, wherein a laser beam with a wavelength in the range of 9 to 11 μm is used.
7. (currently amended) The method as recited in Claim [[1]] 17, wherein a CO_2 laser is used.
8. (currently amended) The method as recited in Claim [[1]] 17, wherein the surface is sprayed with a powder or a solution before or during the laser treatment with the laser radiation, or the ceramic body is infiltrated with a solution that contains the zirconium-containing and/or aluminium-containing compounds.
9. (currently amended) The method as recited in Claim [[1]] 17, wherein the refractory material is tempered after the laser-treatment with the laser radiation.
10. (withdrawn) Refractory material composed of fireclay, light-weight refractory bricks, sillimanite bricks, zirconium and zirconium-containing bricks, and fusion-cast bricks with compositions of Al_2O_3 , SiO_2 , ZrO_2 and/or MgO or CrO , the surface of which is preferably in contact with a glass melt, characterized by a surface treated by laser radiation.
11. (withdrawn) The refractory material as recited in Claim 10, wherein the refractory material (1a) has a vitreous surface layer (1b).

12. (withdrawn) The refractory material as recited in Claim 10, wherein the surface layer (1b) has a thickness of 100 to 1000 μm .

13. (withdrawn) The refractory material as recited in Claim 10, wherein zirconium-containing and/or aluminum-containing compounds are located in the surface layer (1b).

14. (withdrawn) The use of a refractory material as recited in Claim 10 for making furnaces, Danner blowpipes, for feeder channels and/or for drawing dies.

15. (withdrawn) An apparatus for manufacturing and/or processing glass melts that includes the components in contact with the glass melt, the components being composed of refractory material composed of fireclay, light-weight refractory bricks, silimanite bricks, zirconium and zirconium-containing bricks, and fusion-cast bricks with compositions of Al_2O_3 , SiO_2 , ZrO_2 and/or MgO or CrO , wherein the refractory material includes a surface treated by laser radiation.

Claim 16. (canceled)

17. (new) A method of treating refractory material of a Danner blowpipe or a drawing die that comes into contact with a glass melt during glass production, wherein said refractory material has a composition comprising Al_2O_3 , SiO_2 , ZrO_2 and/or MgO or CrO and said refractory material is composed of fireclay,

silimanite bricks, zirconium and zirconium-containing bricks, and/or fusion-cast bricks, said method comprising treating only a surface of the refractory material with laser radiation so as to form a surface layer that is a closed vitreous layer, said closed vitreous layer containing components that are components of the refractory material.

18. (new) The method as recited in Claim 17, wherein the surface layer has a thickness of 100 to 1000 μm .

19. (new) The method as recited in Claim 17, wherein zirconium-containing and/or aluminium-containing compounds are located in the surface layer.

20. (new) A method of manufacturing and/or processing a glass melt, said method comprising bringing the glass melt into contact with a surface of a refractory material composed of Al_2O_3 , SiO_2 , ZrO_2 and/or MgO or CrO , wherein only said surface of the refractory material has been treated with laser radiation in order to form a surface layer that is a closed vitreous layer, said closed vitreous layer containing components that are components of the refractory material;

wherein the refractory material is composed of fireclay, silimanite bricks, zirconium and zirconium-containing bricks, and/or fusion-cast bricks.

21. (new) The method as recited in claim 17, wherein prior to contact with the glass melt said surface is treated with said laser radiation to form a closed vitreous layer, components of which are components of the refractory material.